

DOE NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 24, 2008

PENALTY DOLLARS BENEFIT COMMUNITY

The Department of Energy's Office of River Protection and the Washington State Department of Ecology have reached agreement on settling two violations of the Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order (also known as the Tri-Party Agreement), which will benefit the Mid-Columbia region. The violations involved a tank waste spill at Hanford's S Tank Farm last summer.

"This was a serious event that could have been prevented," said ORP Manager Shirley J. Olinger. "The Department launched an extensive and thorough review to understand what happened and why. We have worked closely with CH2M HILL to close and implement all corrective measures that were identified over the last several months and have strengthened our operations, emergency management, engineering and safety to prevent this type of event from reoccurring."

Ecology issued stipulated penalties totaling \$500,000 against DOE based on two violations of work requirements. The first involved inadequate engineering design related to the water backflow equipment. The second involved inadequate engineering reviews.

As part of the agreement, Ecology has agreed to hold half of the penalty in suspension pending completion of an agreed upon list of corrective actions (in addition to those already taken by DOE and CHG), and one year and 360 hours of active retrieval operations without any similar incidents. After completion of these conditions and approval by Ecology, DOE won't be required to pay the suspended portion of the penalty.

The agreement also includes completion of two Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs) which will cover the remaining portion of the assessed penalty. A SEP is an environmentally beneficial project that a company agrees to undertake when settling an enforcement action. The SEP must improve, restore, protect, or reduce risks to public health and/or the environment beyond that achieved by compliance with applicable laws or regulations.

Under the agreement, CH2M Hill will spend more than \$200,000 upgrading over a dozen breather filters on underground single-shell storage tanks in Hanford's oldest tank farm – T Farm, satisfying \$100,000 of the penalty. The newer technology filters are smaller, lighter

weight and require less maintenance, reducing potential worker exposure. Because they are smaller and lighter than filters currently in use, they will also eliminate many ergonomic issues associated with the older, heavier style filters.

The SEP also provides \$100,000 to the Tri-County Hazardous Materials Response Team which they will use to purchase a new emergency response vehicle and other pieces of needed equipment to improve the community's emergency response capabilities. In addition, CH2M Hill will pay a cash penalty of \$50,000. The penalty is paid from corporate dollars, not out of cleanup funding.

"We have learned a great deal since the spill occurred. In the months since the event, we have implemented a number of field improvements and have emerged from this incident as a safer and stronger company," said CH2M HILL President and Chief Executive Officer, John Fulton. "We are pleased to be able to use some of the penalty dollars as a direct benefit to our community."

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ORP 08-006